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ABSTRACT

This paper advocates that Wisconsin teachers of French should participate in immersion programs for each Department of Instruction recertification cycle. Typically, teachers obtain their immersion experience in France, initially as undergraduate students and subsequently as tour guides for their own students. The paper suggests that North American academic immersion programs for Canadian teachers of French are more in line with the curricular and instructional needs of Wisconsin teachers than are programs often available in France, Belgium, or Switzerland taught by Europeans or U.S. instructors. This article compares the strengths of five North American summer language immersion programs: Trois-Pistoles, at the University of Western Ontario; Trois-Rivieres, at the Universitie du Quebec a Trois-Rivieres; Jonquiere, at the Centre Linguistique; Iles-de-la-Madeline, developed at the Department of Public Instruction in New Brunswick; and Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, a FrancoForum just off the coast of Newfoundland. The paper concludes that immersion programs for teachers are critical, and Wisconsin teachers may benefit from learning about the Quebec language policy. The four appendixes contain the summer reading lists for the programs, program addresses, program comparisons, and information on Saint-Pierre-Miquelon. (SM)

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In Search of Professional Development:

North American Immersion Programs For Teachers of French

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Abstract

The authors advocate that Wisconsin teachers of French should participate in an immersion program for each DPI (Department of Public Instruction) recertification cycle. Typically, teachers obtain their immersion experiences in France initially as an undergraduate student and subsequently as a tour guide for their own students. The authors suggest that academic immersion programs in North America for Canadian teachers of French are more in line with the curricular and instructional needs of Wisconsin teachers (i.e., the United States) than programs often available in France, Belgium, or Switzerland taught by Europeans or U.S. instructors. This article compares the strengths of five North American summer language immersion programs: Trois-Pistoles, Trois-Rivières, Jonquière, Iles-de-la-Madeleine, and Saint-Pierre.

In Search of Professional Development:
North American Immersion Programs
For Teachers of French

Wisconsin is recognized for its strong language programs. In 1996, the Wisconsin legislature required that all public schools provide access (i.e., face-to-face or distance delivered) to a given language beginning in grade 7 and continuing access to that language through high school. In addition, initial teacher licensure in Wisconsin required an immersion component. To meet this immersion requirement and to achieve the intermediate-high proficiency (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines) necessary for certification, student teachers may enroll in a year, semester, or a summer immersion program.

However, once teachers have been teaching for a period of time, their language proficiency often begins to deteriorate. In addition, the teachers' vocabulary may be shaped by the curriculum and textbook focus. Consequently, language teachers aware of this phenomenon often seek additional immersion opportunities to improve their fluency, vocabulary, and cultural sensitivity. Moreover, beginning in September 2004, new Wisconsin teachers will follow PI 34 regulations for recertification (DPI, 2001). In so doing, they may choose an immersion summer language program to develop two or more Wisconsin standards as part of a professional development plan. The implicit goal of these plans is to raise the oral and written proficiency to an advanced level or higher.

Likewise, experienced Wisconsin teachers often search for opportunities to collaborate with teachers of French from other

countries who must deal with similar curricular, instructional, articulation-related issues (Pufahl et al., 2001). Another responsibility of the classroom teacher is the necessity to negotiate with administrators, school boards members, parents, and legislators concerning pedagogy, class size, extra-curricular services, and funding (revenue caps). These political and economic matters frequently require expertise in marketing, union organizing, and lobbying.

For these reasons, regular participation in immersion programs for teachers of French is essential. Typically, U.S. teachers of French have travelled to or studied in France to rejuvenate their language skills. Some state universities host a weekend immersion program for teachers. However, the later rarely provides any sustained use of the language at a superior or "educated, native-speaker" level.

RESEARCH

Little evidence of research is available in the area language maintenance and skill up-grading for language teachers. Heretofore, language coordinators and teacher trainers have concerned themselves with issues of students' language maintenance rather than skill retention of instructors. A search through educational databases (Academic Search, ERIC, Education Full-text, Dissertation Abstracts, Proquest) using a variety of keywords and descriptors results in few citations.

One author does address the issue on teacher refreshment of

language and cultural skills. Richard Lambert, founder of the National Foreign Language Center, has written several articles on the poor quality of language instructors at U.S. federally funded area studies centers. Lambert (1986: 59) suggests that institutions need to provide regular maintenance training and upgrading to prevent proficiency attrition of both "native" and "non-native" instructors. In addition, he maintains that instructors need to be sensitive to changes (standard and colloquial) in language as applied to different levels of formalities. Furthermore, training must be geared to that of five skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking, and culture) since the language instructor is likely to have forgotten content in anyone. Since upper-level functions of superior proficiency are lost first, Lambert recommends that immersion training occur in a target-language country or region (1989, 1992, 2001). He suggests that a language teacher's contract should recognize this inevitability and allocate money and time for immersion maintenance training on a regular basis. Furthermore, each language program should have fellowship options specifically for updating instructors' language teaching skills (Lambert, 1989: 96).

Although Lambert focuses on post-secondary instructors, his argument is applicable to pre-collegiate language teachers as well. Given that all Wisconsin teacher education program faculty members as of 2004 will be responsible for the professional development of their students following graduation and school

placement, collaboration between post-secondary instructors and pre-collegiate faculty for language maintenance is critical. For both the teachers and the Department of Public Instruction staff, continuing efforts to improve language proficiency are a priority (Teacher, 2001). The Canadian summer teacher programs answer this need.

QUEBEC SUMMER IMMERSION PROGRAMS

Therefore, summer immersion programs in North America, specifically in Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Saint-Pierre, may be more useful than those in Europe. (Appendix A, B, C) This usefulness may relate to political and pedagogical reasons. For example, Quebecois are constantly lobbying the Canadian federal government in Ottawa for the utilization of French. Furthermore, Quebecois insist that Anglophiles in Montreal use French in public as the official language and for a coherent language policy (Plourde, 2000). The majority of Quebecois do not want a bilingual language policy since the tolerance of English will diminish the importance and purity of French and the Quebecois culture. Quebecois strategies may be applicable for Wisconsin teachers of French.

The events of September 2001 have illustrated the lack of language proficiency necessary for employment in U.S. government agencies and commerce. The passionate fight in Quebec for increased French proficiency is similar to the Wisconsin desire for consistent, sequential language programs from kindergarten

through grade twelve and beyond. Therefore, teachers of French must market their language program against the arguments of monolingual, Anglophone parents, principals, curriculum coordinators, school board members, and state representatives.

In contrast, the French in France do not have to defend their language; it is a given. The French teachers of French have a strong, centralized curriculum that focuses on the French culture and the purity of the French language (l'Academie Française). Parents and administrators typically concur with the program. Because in France, the majority of students and teachers are first-language speakers, there are few political, economic, or pedagogical issues similar to those for teachers of French in Wisconsin. Consequently, an immersion program in France does not provide the political and pedagogical benefit that such a program in Francophone North America supports. Furthermore, the language program in France are not consistent with the needs (articulation, standards, benchmarks, constituent attitudes) of Wisconsin teachers.

Thus, for pedagogical reasons, Quebecois immersion programs provide a better framework for curricular development than do programs in France. In Quebec, the medium of instruction for public education is French and the content area focuses on issues of Canada and North America. Moreover, the anglophone schools in Quebec and other provinces like those in Wisconsin, French is taught as a "foreign" language.

In the Canadian situation, the materials used often are

those from the United States. In such cases, U.S. authors have concentrated on vocabulary and cultural behaviors of the French in France and not those in North America. This European focus poses a significant problem for Wisconsin students who increasingly secure positions in Francophone North America.

Canadian teachers who teach in immersion schools or course-specific schools typically follow ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines and assessment instruments. Like in Canada, the Wisconsin teachers of French need to develop curricula specifically for their own location and instructional designs which focus on collaboration and communication competencies. They can promote principles of collaboration through their communication with their North American colleagues of French.

In contrast, when some U.S. universities hold their training in France, the U.S. administrators typically utilize U.S. materials for curricular discussions and their U.S. teacher-participants rarely talk with French teachers of French concerning language curriculum or instructional strategies. For the political and pedagogical experience, Wisconsin teachers would benefit significantly from language-teacher immersion programs in Quebec.

FIVE PROGRAMS

The immersion programs in Quebec province are an important source of revenue for communities. Many of citizens in small

towns have lost jobs in fishing, forestry, and farming. Consequently, most of the immersion programs provide home-stays to facilitate the distribution of participant fees. Lodging and meals with host families enables teachers of French to observe and to inquire about language and cultural practices. Indeed there are immersion programs in metropolitan Montreal and Quebec city; however, teachers typically benefit more from small, mono-lingual French communities. All programs have a French only contract regulation to comply with the Quebec government language policy. The citizens want the immersion program to work so often they act as "language police" who patiently insist on French.

Trois-Pistoles (3810 pop.) - The University of Western Ontario in collaboration with the Trois-Pistoles village council has offered a summer language program since 1932 (Fortin & Lechasseur, 1993; Rioux, 1997). Today, the Trois-Pistoliens, a Gaspé Peninsula community, cater to 265 students from primarily Canada, the United States, and Mexico. In addition to the typical grammar, writing, and pronunciation courses, the program offers courses in the history, society, and politics of Quebec and in Quebecois theater.

Another feature of this program is the opportunity for students to participate in a 36-hour practicum. During the past summer over 30 students worked on a volunteer basis at a variety of locations including the public library (Kuntz, 2001), the Basque Society (Laroque, 1994), the hospital, several grocery stores, a computer center, several camp grounds, a day care, a

tourist center, and the church (Beaulieu, 1997). This employment enables students to integrate with villagers and learn more about the local culture and idiomatic expressions.

For teachers of French who seek a concentrated pedagogical training, the program provides a two-week institute for 20 teachers of immersion or course-based programs.

Trois-Rivières (64,000 pop.) - Shortly after the creation of the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières in 1969, the language faculty created the Ecole Internationale de Français. The University of Wisconsin affiliated with this program for several years in the early 1990s. The staff is excellent and also serves the needs of government officials seeking superior-level proficiency necessary for bilingual placements. Weekend trips to Québec and Montréal are highlights. Unlike other summer programs, this one provides language-learning activities for participants' childrens and spouses.

Jonquière (65,400 pop.) - The Collège de Jonquière created the Centre Linguistique in 1974 to serve Canadian federal employees who now needed to meet bilingual regulations. Teachers of French in immersion and regular schools also joined these motivated technocrats to learn more about the Lac-Saint-Jean region and Amer-Indian communities of northeastern Quebec. The Central States Conference in the past has funded several of its members to attend the three-week program. The trip to Tadoussac to watch whales in the Saint Lawrence River from rubber rafts is a high point.

Iles-de-la-Madeleine (5000 pop) - Staff at the Department of Public Instruction of New Brunswick have organized this program for their teachers of immersion programs and regular classes. Like in the United States, the teachers of French from New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island utilize the ACTFL oral proficiency guidelines and national standards as benchmarks. These teachers like those of Wisconsin have recertification requirements which include immersion activities. Therefore, in the mornings, the DPI language staff conduct workshops for teachers to collaborate by subject or grade level in preparing thematic curricular units. During the afternoons, there is plenty of time to unwind and learn new vocabulary via aquatic sports among the five islands located in the middle of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. This Acadian community provides teachers with another point of view of Canadian history.

Saint-Pierre & Miquelon (5000 pop) - The Embassy of France sponsored the construction of the FrancoForum to attract Canadians to the three islands of this "département" -- just off the coast of Newfoundland. For several years, the Central States Conference has supported members to study at Saint-Pierre. Participation in the Bastille Day festivities in North America is unique particularly in viewing the Basque, Bretagne, and Normandie celebrations. U.S. teachers are often surprised to learn that Saint-Pierre was a transit point for Al Capone's shipments of alcohol during the period of prohibition in the United States. Recently, U.S. teachers may have become familiar

with Saint-Pierre through the film "The Widow of St.-Pierre." In the past, several instructors have been language teachers from various universities in France. Consequently, there is a great deal of sharing of teaching strategies among Canadian, U.S., and French instructors. Curriculum development is an expectation. (See Appendix D)

CONCLUSION

Immersion programs for teachers are critical. Teachers need to have time to utilize their target language in various contexts within the community for cultural acquisition. Homestays provided an opportunity for a non-academic interpretation of various language and cultural phenomena. Three to five weeks provides the teacher with the opportunity to pass through various stages of culture shock which a one-week excursion would not allow. Regardless of which location a Wisconsin teacher selects, all the programs provide a good review of grammar, reading, listening, writing, and pronunciation. The differences in history and society set the programs apart. By becoming familiar with the Quebec language policy (Plourde, 2000), Wisconsin teachers may obtain additional strategies to deal with politicians and school boards and to promote their local French programs.

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Appendix A

Summer Reading

Bessette, G. (1993). *Le libraire.* Montreal, QC: Editions Pierre Tisseyre.

Blais, M.-C. (1991). *Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel.* Montreal, QC: Editions du Boréal.

Carrier, R. (1977). *Il n'y a pas de pays sans grand-père.* Quebec, QC: Alain Stanké.

Cousture, A. (1985). *Les filles de Caleb: le chant du coq.* Vieu- Montreal, QC: Quebec/Amerique.

Gallant, M. (1984). *Ti-Jean: contes Acadiens.* Moncton, NB: Editions d'Acadie.

Godbout, J. (1967). *Salut Galarneau!* Montreal, QC: Editions du Seuil.

Grignon, C.-H. (1933/1977). *Un homme et son péché.* Quebec, QC: Alain Stanké.

Hébert, A. (1988). *Le premier jardin.* Montreal, QC: Editions du Seuil.

Jasmin, C. (1982). *Ethel et le terroriste.* Montreal, QC: Alain Stanké.

Roy, G. (1947). *Bonheur d'occasion.* Montreal, QC: Editions aux Chemin.

Roy, G. (1993). *La petite poule d'eau.* Montreal, QC: Editions du Boréal.

<u>Iles-de-la-Madeleine</u>

*Carbonneau, H. (1974). *Gabriel et Geneviève.* Moncton, NB: Editions d'Acadie.

*Chantraine, P. (1994). *Le grand bal des baleines.* Moncton, NB: Editions d'Acadie.

*Lemieux, J. (1995). *Le trésors de Brion.* Boucherville, QC: Quebec/Amerique.

*Lemieux, J. (1991). *Lune rouge.* Boucherville, QC: Quebec/ Amerique.

L'Orme, J.C. de (1980). *Histoire populaire des Iles de la*

Madeleine. Montreal, Auroure-Univers.

Musée de la mer. (1993). *Deux cents ans d'histoire: album souvenir*. Havre-Aubert, QC: Musée de la mer, Iles de la Madeleine.

Jonquière

Bouchard, R. (1997). *Histoire de Jonquière: cour industriel du Saguenay--Lac-Saint-Jean: des origines à 1997*. Chicoutimi-Nord, QC: R. Bouchard.

Igartua, J.E. (1996). *Arvida au Saguenay: naissance d'une ville industrielle*. Montréal, QC: McGill University Press.

Saint-Gelais, P. (1996). *Hier à Jonquière*. Jonquière, QC: P. Saint-Gelais.

Saint-Pierre et Miquelon

Allain-Poirier, J. (1997). *Vie de famille aux iles Saint-Pierre et Miquelon*. Nantes: Petit Vehicule.

Andrieux, J.-P. (1983). *La prohibition..Cap Sur Saint-Pierre et Miquelon*. Ottawa, OT: Editions Leméac.

Andrieux, J.-P. (1983). *Saint-Pierre et Miquelon: A fragment of France in North America*. Lincoln, OT: W.F. Rannie.

Cantraine, P. (1992). *La dernière queue de morue*. Montreal, QC: L'Etincelle editeur.

Guillaume, D. (1995). *Saint-Pierre et Miquelon du commandement de la colonie au conseil général de la collectivité*. St-Pierre: Gescom Sarl.

Le Heunen, J. & R. (1985). *Contes, récits et légendes des iles Saint-Pierre et Miquelon*. Moncton, NB: Editions d'Acadie.

*Nicole, E. (1988). *L'Oeuvre des mers*. Paris: Edition François Bourin.

Trois-Pistoles

Audet, G. (1997). *Gaspesie, Bas-Saint-Laurent, Iles-de-la-Madeleine*. Montreal, QC: Editions Ulysse.

Beaulieu, J.F. & Gaudrea, G. (1997). *Notre-Dame-des-Neiges de Trois-Pistoles*. Trois-Pistoles, QC: Centre d'Edition des Basques.

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*Beaulieu, V.-L. (1973). *Jack Kerouac*. Quebec, QC: Alain Stanké.

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Trois-Rivières

Gamelin, A. (1984). *Trois-Rivières illustrée*. Trois-Rivières, QC: Corporation des fêtes du 350e anniversaire.

Gareau, S. (1990). *Quand le passé se fait présent*. Cap-de-la-Madeleine, QC: Centre de Bénévolat du Trois-Rivières Métropolitain.

Tourangeau, R. (1984) *Trois-Rivières en liesse: aperçu historique des fêtes*. Québec, QC: Edition Cedoleq.

Voisine, N. (1980). *Louise-Francois Laflèche, deuxième évéque de Trois-Rivières*. Saint-Hyacinthe, QC: Edisem.

* = local novelists

Appendix B

Addresses

Centre Nautique de l'Istorlet
100, chemin de l'Istorlet
C.P. 249
Havre-Aubert, Iles-de-la-Madeleine
QC G0B 1J0
Canada

ricer@gov.nb.ca
1 (506) 847-6232
1 (418) 937-5206
istorlet@sympatico.ca
1 (888) 937-8166
www3.sympatico.ca/istorlet

Centre Linguistique du Collège de Jonquière
2505, rue St-Hubert
Jonquière, QC G7X 7W2
Canada

centling@cjonquiere.qc.ca
1 (800) 622-0352
college.cjonquiere.qc.ca/centre_linguistique

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Appendix C

Programs Comparisons

	Iles-de-la-Madeleine, Québec	Jonquière, Québec	Trois-Pistoles, Québec	Trois-Rivières, Québec	Pointe-de-l'Eglise, Nouvelle Ecosse	Saint-Pierre, N Am (France)
Sponsor	Dept. Public Inst., New Brunswick	CEGEP - Collège de Jonquière	Univ. of Western Ontario	Univ. du Québec à Trois-Rivières	Univ. Sainte-Anne	Embassy of France (Canada)
Location	Istorlet, Havre-Albert	Centre Linguistique	Ecole de Langue Française	Ecole Internationale de Français	Immersion Française Institut Acadien	FrancoForum Institut de Langue Française
Length	2, 2-wk T (July)	1, 3-wk G (July)	1, 2-wk T 1, 5-wk G (July/Aug.)	1, 3-wk T (July) multiple progs child's prog.	1, 4-wk T 1, 5-wk G (July, Aug)	1, 3-wk T (July)
Date of origin	1999	1970	1932	1974 (1990)	?	1996
Lodging	families	families	families	dorm	dorm	families
Meals	Istorlet	cafeteria + families	families	cafeteria + families	cafeteria	families
Placement (test)	no	yes	yes (pre & post)	yes	yes	yes
Morning class	8:30-12:00	9:00-12:00	8:40-12:00	9:00-12:00	varied	9:00-12:00

	Iles-de-la-Madeleine, Québec	Jonquière, Québec	Trois-Pistoles, Québec	Trois-Rivières, Québec	Pointe-de-l'Eglise, Nouvelle Ecosse	Saint-Pierre, N Am (France)
Courses	pedagogy	3 levels	8 levels theater, Quebec history & culture	3 levels	3 levels T 8 levels G	3 levels, creative writing, literature
Afternoon activities	water sports		1:30-3:30 atelier 4:00-5:00 sports	1:30-3:30 ateliers	2:00-3:30 ateliers	ateliers sports
Evening activities	yes	5 for pay	yes (required)	yes	yes	no
Weekend trips		Lac St-Jean Tadoussac	Québec Mt. Albert Is. aux Basques	Québec Montréal Cabane de Sucre	?	Is. Miquelon Is. Marins Is. Langlade
Ethnic focus	Acadie		Basque		Acadie	Pays Basque, Bretagne, Normandie
community job practicum	no	no	yes - 35 positions	yes	no	no
Instructors	New Brunswick	CEGEP	Univ. Laval & UQ-Rimouski	Univ. Québec à Trois-Rivières	Univ. Sainte-Anne	France
Group leaders	no	no	yes, locals	yes, locals	no	no
Cost US$	$1150		$1800 (nc)	$950	$1700/1400?	$2100 ?
Credit	NC/CEU/cert.	?3 crs./cert	?6 crs./NC	3 crs.	6/9crs.	NC/cert.

	Iles-de-la-Madeleine, Québec	Jonquière, Québec	Trois-Pistoles, Québec	Trois-Rivières, Québec	Pointe-de-l'Eglise, Nouvelle Ecosse	Saint-Pierre, N Am (France)
U.S. credit affiliation	Univ. of Maine-Orono	Univ. of Central Florida	?Univ of Buffalo	Southeastern Louisiana Univ.	? Univ. of Louisiana	?

T = teacher program, G = general population program

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Cultural Comparisons

	FRENCH	ACADIANS	QUEBECOIS
Locations	Saint-Pierre & Miquelon	Iles-de-la-Madeleine Ile-de-Prince-Edouard Nouveau-Brunswick Nouvelle-Ecosse Nouvelle-Orléans (Cajun) Terre-Neuve	Province du Québec (Province de l'Ontario)
Programs	FrancoForum	Istorlet Unversité Saint-Anne	UQ à Trois-Rivières UQ à Chicoutimi CEGEP-Jonquière Ecole Trois-Pistoles Université Laval Université de Montréal (McGill University)
Currency	French Francs (Euros)	Canadian Dollars	Canadian Dollars
Flag	French (Blue, White, Red)	Acadian (Blue with gold star, White, Red)	Parti Québécois (4 white fleur-de-lis on blue background)
National Heritage	Bretagne, Normandie, Le Pays Basque	18th Century Refugees (French, North American territory -- Bretagne, Normandie)	Le Pays Basque, Bretagne, Normandie, Poland, Russia, etc.
Heritage Occupations	Fisher (cod fish)	Farmers (fishers) saw mills	Whalers, loggers, farmers, trappers
National Day	14 July (Fête Nationale - Bastille)	15 August (Assomption)	24 June (Jean-le- Baptist)

	FRENCH	ACADIANS	QUEBECOIS
Higher Education	France - Caen, St.- Malo (French system)	Université Saint-Anne 1890	Université Laval 1852 Université de Montréal 1930s Université du Québec à 1960s
French	Standard Parisian French	Bilingual/bicultural (alternate languages)	Québec French (Anglicisms)
English	"foreign language"	yes	refused for political reasons (purists)

Cultural Activity

Identify one of six location(s) for the following descriptions:

1. The location of the site for a recent film about a murder and capital punishment [Saint-Pierre]

2. A location known for its paper mill [Jonquière, Trois-Rivières]

3. The community which has hosted students of French for 70 years [Trois-Pistoles]

4. The community which experienced a devastating flood [Jonquière]

5. The location which has English- and French-speaking areas? [Iles-de-la-Madeleine]

6. The location of a salt being mined for U.S. roads [Iles-de-la-Madeleine]

7. The community where the current church is built on the site of five successive buildings [Trois-Pistoles]

8. The location known for its sand castle competition in August [Iles-de-la-Madeleine]

9. Community where Al Capone "hung out" [Saint-Pierre]

10. The location where Acadians settled in 1755 [Iles-de-la-Madeleine]

11. The location of a power house used for aluminum production [Jonquière]

12. The community founded in 1634 as a trading post [Trois-Rivières]

13. The community having a wall for playing pelote [Trois-Pistoles, Saint-Pierre]

14. The community with the Couvent des Ursulines (1697) [Trois-Rivières]

15. The community with an old university (19th century) [Pointe de l'Eglise]

16. The community known for its shipwrecks [Saint-Pierre]